REMARKS

The Office Action dated July 19, 2010 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing Amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-5, 7-21, and 23 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-5 and 7-21 stand rejected. Claim 23 is newly added. No additional fee is due for newly added Claim 23.

The rejection of Claims 1-5 and 7-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0060266 to Baerlocher (hereinafter referred to as "Baerlocher") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,947,821 to Stone (hereinafter referred to as "Stone") and U.S. Patent No. 6,620,046 to Rowe (hereinafter referred to as "Rowe") is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite "comparing, by a server, the accepted wager to the preselected wager threshold . . . prompting the player to increase the accepted wager when the accepted wager is less than the preselected wager threshold . . . when the accepted wager equals the preselected wager threshold, receiving a trigger signal at the gaming machine . . . initiating the secondary game, by the gaming machine, in response to the trigger signal...." Applicants respectfully submit that such a recitation is supported in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0045].

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe describes nor suggests such a recitation. Specifically, no combination of Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe describes suggests a server that compares a wager to a threshold and transmits a trigger signal to a gaming machine to initiate a secondary game only when the wager is equal to or greater than the threshold, but does not transmit the trigger signal when the wager is less than the threshold.

Baerlocher describes a gaming method that requires a player at a gaming device (10) to wager a number of credits to qualify or be eligible for a main or first bonus game. The gaming device (10) determines whether a bonus triggering symbol or symbol combination

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(hereinafter referred to as a "bonus trigger") for the first bonus game appears along a payline (56) or in a scatter arrangement. If the bonus trigger for the first bonus game is generated, the gaming device (10) determines whether the player has wagered at least a first predefined number of credits. If so, the gaming device (10) initiates the first bonus game. If the bonus trigger is generated, but the player has not wagered at least the first predefined number of credits, the gaming device (10) determines whether the player has wagered at least a second predefined number of credits, which is less than the first predefined number. If so, the gaming machine (10) initiates a second bonus game. In addition, if the bonus trigger is not generated but a second, different bonus trigger for the second bonus game has been generated, and at least the second predefined number of credits has been wagered, the gaming device (10) initiates the second bonus game.

Stone describes a gaming machine (10) that presents a card game to a player. At the start of play, the player selects at least one of a plurality of cards (30) to be designated as a wild card (32). After at least one wild card (32) is selected, the player is dealt a first hand (34) of cards (30). The player has the option of holding any of the cards (30) in the first hand (34), and cards not held by the player are automatically discarded and replaced by another deal that results in a second hand (36). The gaming machine (10) determines whether the second hand (36) is a winning hand or a losing hand. If the second hand (36) is a losing hand, the player may make an additional wager to "buy" another wild card (72), and the hand is re-evaluated to determine whether it is a winning hand or a losing hand. If the second hand (36) is a winning hand, the player may wager the amount won in a double-or-nothing hand. During play of the double-or-nothing hand, a first card (92) is dealt face up and a plurality of cards (94) is dealt face down. The player chooses one of the face down cards (94) and, if the card (94) ranks higher than the face up card (92), the player's winning payout is doubled.

Rowe describes a bonus system (50) that includes a gaming machine (20) that is coupled to other devices through a communication network (58), including other gaming machines (20) and a player tracking or reward system host (54). The gaming machine (20) includes a player tracking device including a card reader (34) and/or a keypad (44). The host (54) provides a player tracking reward or "comp" function in which players that use player

tracking cards are awarded with prizes based on, for example, a number of points accrued by using the player tracking card during play. The bonus system (50) determines eligibility of players to participate in a bonus event based on, for example, play of a specific gaming machine or type of gaming machine, wagering of a particular amount, an amount won or lost, a particular point total in a player's reward account, whether the player has identified himself via the host (54), and the like. The bonus event is enabled for eligible players, and winning players are then awarded with a bonus prize.

Claim 1 recites a method for controlling access to a secondary game on a gaming machine during play of a primary game, wherein the method comprises "accepting a wager from the player via a gaming machine input device . . . comparing, by a server, the accepted wager to the preselected wager threshold . . . prompting the player to increase the accepted wager when the accepted wager is less than the preselected wager threshold . . . when the accepted wager equals the preselected wager threshold, receiving a trigger signal at the gaming machine . . . initiating the secondary game, by the gaming machine, in response to the trigger signal ...."

No combination of Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe describes nor suggests a method, as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe describes nor suggests using a server to compare a wager to a threshold and transmitting a trigger signal from the server to a gaming machine to initiate a secondary game only when the wager is equal to or greater than the threshold, but not transmitting the trigger signal when the wager is less than the threshold. Rather, Baerlocher describes a surprise or mystery bonus trigger that is compared to a wager amount by a gaming machine such that the amount necessary to trigger the bonus is unknown to the player, Stone describes a card game that enables a player to purchase a second game after play of a first game dependent on the outcome of the first game, and Rowe describes determining eligibility for participation in a bonus and awarding a bonus independent of a specific outcome of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone and Rowe.

Claims 2-5 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-5 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-5 likewise are patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone and Rowe.

Claim 7 recites a system for allowing secondary play on a gaming machine having a primary game and a secondary game, wherein the system comprises "a server comprising: a determiner structured to compare a wager to the prestored trigger . . . a controller coupled to said determiner and structured to transmit a trigger signal to the gaming machine to initiate the secondary game, wherein said controller is configured to transmit the trigger signal only when the wager meets the prestored trigger...."

No combination of Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe describes nor suggests a system, as recited in Claim 7. More specifically, no combination of Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe describes nor suggests a server that compares a wager to a prestored trigger and transmits a trigger signal to a gaming machine to initiate a secondary game only when the wager meets the prestored trigger, but does not transmit the trigger signal when the wager does not meet the prestored trigger. Rather, Baerlocher describes a surprise or mystery bonus trigger that is compared to a wager amount by a gaming machine such that the amount necessary to trigger the bonus is unknown to the player, Stone describes a card game that enables a player to purchase a second game after play of a first game dependent on the outcome of the first game, and Rowe describes determining eligibility for participation in a bonus and awarding a bonus independent of a specific outcome of a base game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 7 is submitted to be patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone and Rowe.

Claims 8-15 depend from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 8-15 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 8-15 likewise are patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone and Rowe.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-5 and 7-15 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 16-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe, and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0142846 to Paulsen (hereinafter referred to as "Paulsen") is respectfully traversed.

Baerlocher, Stone, and Rowe are described above. Paulsen describes a user interface (50) for use in modifying a player preference account. The user interface (50) may be displayed on a computing device such as a gaming machine (2) or a home computer. The user interface (50) may be used by a player to create and modify a preference account that includes preference account information corresponding to one or more game playing options preferred by the player. The user interface (50) may also be used by a game operator or a preference account administrator to create and modify preference accounts for game players. The preference account information may include, for example, loyalty point account information and settings, preferred promotional opportunities, preferred games and game feature settings for the games, preferred gaming machine settings, preferred bonus games, preferred progressive games, and preferred service options.

Claim 16 recites a method of initiating a secondary game on a gaming machine during play of a primary game, wherein the method comprises "determining whether a player is enrolled in a player tracking system . . . accepting a wager via a gaming machine input device . . . comparing, by a server, the wager to the one of the first and second predetermined thresholds . . . transmitting a trigger signal from the server to the gaming machine when the accepted wager equals one of the first predetermined threshold when it is determined that the player is not enrolled in the player tracking system, and the second predetermined threshold when it is determined that the player is enrolled in the player tracking system . . . permitting play on a secondary game at the gaming machine in response to the trigger signal...."

No combination of Baerlocher, Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen describes nor suggests a method, as recited in Claim 16. More specifically, no combination of Baerlocher, Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen describes nor suggests a server that compares a wager to a first predetermined threshold and a second predetermined threshold and transmits a trigger signal to a gaming machine to initiate a secondary game only when the wager equals one of a first predetermined threshold and a second predetermined threshold, but does not transmit the

trigger signal when the wager does not meet either of the first predetermined threshold and the second predetermined threshold.

Rather, Baerlocher describes a surprise or mystery bonus trigger that is compared to a wager amount by a gaming machine such that the amount necessary to trigger the bonus is unknown to the player, Stone describes a card game that enables a player to purchase a second game after play of a first game dependent on the outcome of the first game, Rowe describes determining eligibility for participation in a bonus and awarding a bonus independent of a specific outcome of a base game, and Paulsen describes a user interface for use in creating and modifying a preference account for a game player that includes preference account information corresponding to one or more game playing options preferred by the player.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 16 is submitted to be patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen.

Claims 17-20 depend from independent Claim 16. When the recitations of Claims 17-20 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 16, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 17-20 likewise are patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen.

Claim 21 recites a system for accessing a secondary game during play of a primary game, wherein the system comprises "a plurality of gaming machines . . . a server coupled to the plurality of gaming machines, wherein said server comprises . . . a comparator configured to: compare the wager to the one of the first and second wager thresholds . . . prompt the player via said monitor to increase the wager if the wager is less than the one of the first and second wager thresholds . . . transmit a trigger signal to at least one of the plurality of gaming machines to initiate a secondary game based only on the comparison of the wager to one of the first and second wager thresholds, wherein the comparator is configured to transmit the trigger signal only when the wager is at least equal to and greater than the one of the first and second wager thresholds and not when the wager is less than the one of the first and second wager thresholds...."

No combination of Baerlocher, Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen describes nor suggests a system, as recited in Claim 21. More specifically, no combination of Baerlocher, Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen describes nor suggests a server that includes a comparator, wherein the comparator compares a wager to one of a first wager threshold and a second wager threshold, prompts a player to increase a wager if the wager is less than the one of the first and second wager thresholds, and transmit a trigger signal to at least one of a plurality of gaming machines to initiate a secondary game when the wager is at least equal to the one of the first and second wager thresholds, and wherein the comparator does not transmit the trigger signal when the wager is less than the one of the first and second wager thresholds.

Rather, Baerlocher describes a surprise or mystery bonus trigger that is compared to a wager amount by a gaming machine such that the amount necessary to trigger the bonus is unknown to the player, Stone describes a card game that enables a player to purchase a second game after play of a first game dependent on the outcome of the first game, Rowe describes determining eligibility for participation in a bonus and awarding a bonus independent of a specific outcome of a base game, and Paulsen describes a user interface for use in creating and modifying a preference account for a game player that includes preference account information corresponding to one or more game playing options preferred by the player.
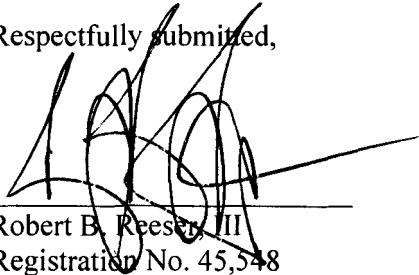
Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 21 is submitted to be patentable over Baerlocher in view of Stone, Rowe, and Paulsen.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 16-21 be withdrawn.

Newly added Claim 23 depends from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 23 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that Claim 23 likewise is patentable over the cited art.

In view of the foregoing Amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert B. Reese III
Registration No. 45,548
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
7700 Forsyth Blvd., Suite 1800
St. Louis, Missouri 63105
(314) 621-5070